



Dear Premier Ford
Minister of Transportation Mulroney

As member organizations of the Hamilton Transit Alliance, we are writing to urge the Province of Ontario to fund public transit in Hamilton and across Ontario. Prime Minister Trudeau's announcement of support for the Safe Restart Plan funding is predicated on cooperation with provincial governments. The Federal Government has made clear that they are seeking Provinces to show leadership, by stepping up with support to ensure that municipalities can continue to safely operate public transit systems.

Municipalities have been pushed to the brink of financial crisis by the pandemic. Collectively, Canadian public transit systems have lost billions of dollars in fare revenue, leaving transit agencies like the Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) struggling to provide safe, socially distanced, vital transit as the city reopens and ridership climbs. Many transit agencies, including the HSR, have made major investments to improve transit in the last few years, but these gains are now at risk because of the financial impact of the pandemic crisis. In addition, future improvements will or are being delayed, as shown with Hamilton City Council's recent decision to delay planned investments in our HSR - purchases of buses and hiring of new drivers - precisely when we need more buses on the road to help travellers like essential workers get to their jobs. In Hamilton the HSR has already lost \$11 million in fare revenue and has had to absorb close to a million dollars in extra costs for necessary COVID-19 related cleaning. In addition to this we have already seen our post-secondary education institutions seek to cancel or refund transit pass arrangements - which means as much as a potential 18% cut to HSR revenue. This revenue shortfall has happened in tandem as the HSR has moved to a special Saturday schedule which is already increasing the frequency of bus pass-bys, which has had a negative ongoing impact on riders with disabilities and those still getting to their essential jobs in particular.

During this crisis we have seen the Federal and Provincial governments put forward clear, positive programs to support a variety of industries. Unfortunately, transit has been left in a jurisdictional limbo, with each level of government calling for leadership from the other. We are asking that you break this deadlock by publicly committing to contributing to the emergency relief funding to transit agencies, and further commit to sustainable transit funding to ensure the long-term operational viability of public transit in Canada.

We are requesting that you respond, in writing, with your government's commitment as soon as possible. Riders are being left at the curb and without intervention by the province and the federal governments, we fear that the impact from the pandemic on public transit will only negatively impact the economy and environment even more.

- Hamilton Transit Alliance
(ATU 107, Hamilton ACORN, Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, Hamilton District Labour Council, Disability Justice Network of Ontario, Environment Hamilton, YWCA Hamilton, McMaster Student Union, Immigrants Working Centre, and Neighbour 2 Neighbour)

REPRESENTATIVE CONTACT: Ian Borsuk of Environment Hamilton, iborsuk@environmenthamilton.org